Positive Behavior Supports in the Inclusive Setting for Children Affected with Autism

Kathy Wandler, M.A., M.S., BCBA

Behavior Analyst and Education Consultant

What Are Positive Behavior Supports?

- Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) is an empirically validated, function-based approach to eliminate challenging behaviors and replace them with prosocial skills. Use of PBS decreases the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions (i.e., punishment or suspension) and can lead to both systemic as well as individualized change.

Why Positive Behavior Supports?

- SELPA's in California promote Positive Behavior Support (PBS) which is a philosophical viewpoint for addressing problematic behaviors in students. Based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) (Baer, Wolf and Risley, 1968), PBS was adopted in 1993 by the State of California, Department of Education as the mandated approach to intervening in the classroom when special education students exhibit non-desired behaviors. (CA Code of Regulations Title 5, Section 3052)

- According to IDEA '97, PBS is the recommended form of intervention for dealing with challenging behavior in children with disabilities.

The basic tenets to PBS are:

- All behavior communicates something for the student (a want or need).
- If we only punish a student <u>after</u> the misbehavior occurs, we will not make a lasting change in the behavior, as it may only be temporarily suppressed.
- We must teach students <u>new</u>, <u>appropriate</u> ways to communicate their wants and needs.
- There are many accommodations to the school environment that can be made to reduce the incidence of (and need for) non-desired behaviors.
- Teaching new, more appropriate behaviors requires a continuous process of modeling, prompting, shaping and reinforcing-just like teaching any new skill!

Ventury County SELPA

The Most Frequently Observed Challenging Behaviors in the School Setting That Need PBS

- Running from teacher and support staff
- Self-stim (flapping, rocking, mouthing objects, spitting)
- Looking away, non-responsive, non-compliance
- Sit Down Strikes (falling to the floor)
- Climbing on counters, tables, bookcases, YOU, etc.
- Screaming, yelling, loud noises
- Property Destruction
- Tantrums (a combination of behaviors)
- Self-Injurious
- Hitting, pushing, biting, etc.

Understanding the ABC's Can Be A Powerful Tool to Understand and Change Behaviors

Three-Term Contingencies (An ABC Analysis)

Antencedent	Behavior	Consequence
Stimulus	Behavior (all kinds)	Social Positive Reinforcement
		Social Negative Reinforcement

It is important to identify What events are happening between the Environment and Behavior

What is Reinforcement?

- Reinforcement is ANYTHING that INCREASES a behavior
- Reinforcement can be getting GOOD things (e.g., attention, food, an item)
- Negative Attention in the form of a reprimand can sometimes be reinforcers for kiddos-attention is attention whether it's good or bad
- Reinforcement can be the removal or getting away from yucky things (e.g., demands, circle time, recess)
- Most reinforcement occurs unplanned or naturally

What Are The Consequences That Maintain Challenging Behavior

- Social-Positive Reinforcement (Social Sr+):

    Antecedent Event
    (Deprivation from Attention)

    ↓

    Behavior
    (SIB, AGG, Property Destruction)

    ↓

    Consequent Event
    (Reprimand, comfort, leisure item, snacks, etc.)

Consequences cont:

- Social-Negative Reinforcement (Social Sr-):

  Antecedent Event
  (Task Demands)

  ↓

  Behavior
  (Noncompliance, SIB, AGG, PD)

  ↓

  Consequent Event
  (Termination of Task)

Consequences Cont:

- Automatic-Positive Reinforcement (Automatic Sr+):

  Antecedent Event
  (Lack of Stimulation)

  ↓

  Behavior
  (SIB, STPY)

  ↓

  Consequent Event
  (Sensory Stimulation)

Consequences Cont:

- Automatic-Negative Reinforcement (Automatic Sr-):
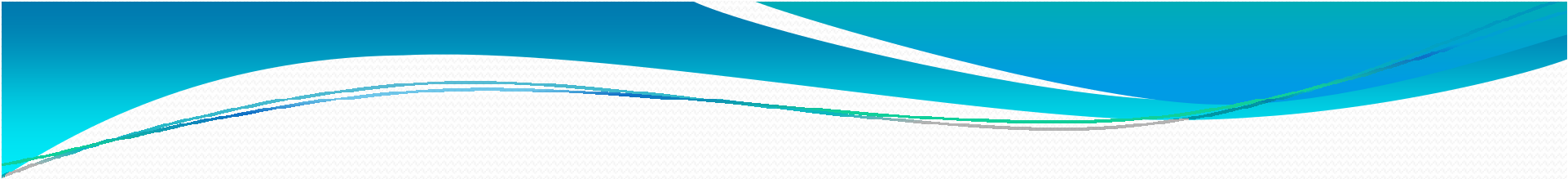
  Antecedent Event
  (Pain or Discomfort)

  ↓

  Behavior
  (SIB, STPY)

  ↓

  Consequent Event
  (Alleviation of Discomfort)

BOTH POSITIVE AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS ARE STRENGTHENED BY REINFORCEMENT

What Causes Challenging Behaviors in the Classroom?

- Many challenging behaviors are caused by inadvertent reinforcement
- Challenging behaviors may get attention or a reaction
- Challenging behaviors may allow access to a reinforcer
- Challenging behaviors may allow one to escape an undesirable activity
- Challenging behaviors may be FUN (self-stim, climbing)
- The student may lack alternative skills to access or escape from the same reinforcer

How to use Reinforcement to Reduce Challenging Behaviors in the Classroom

- Don't get caught off guard----Make sure you really have a reinforcer!
- To start, deliver the reinforcer immediately after the positive/alternative behavior occurs (this begins a history of reinforcement for that specific behavior)
- Contrive maximum amount of opportunities for the positive behavior to occur
- Deliver some Free Bees
- Use a variety of reinforcers (student preference)
- Some kiddos require lots of reinforcers per hour
- Lack of reinforcement for positive behavior can increase the challenging behavior

Let's Talk About Ignoring the Challenging Behavior as an Intervention: Extinction

- Whether Behavior is maintained by escape or attention . . . BE PREPARED for an Extinction Burst. Kiddos will "up the ante".

- Eye contact is still attention (reinforcement)

- POKER FACE-facial reactions are still attention

- BANTER BE GONE-don't argue, scold or talk

- Shortly after the challenging behavior stops, show the child lots of attention.

How to Change Challenging Behaviors

- Identify the cause and frequency
- Reinforcers are your behavior change secret weapon: Identify and control them
- All the research on positive behavior change procedures identifies three parts to an intervention:
  - Teach and reinforce (positive) replacement behaviors
  - Change the consequence after the challenging behavior (reduce)
  - Prevention (antecedent intervention)

How to Implement the 3 Parts to an Intervention-How About Non-Compliant Behavior??

- Behavior: Falling to the floor, tantrum, hitting, throwing, etc.
- Causes: Teacher demands (transition from preferred to non-preferred activity, or removal or denial of a preferred reinforcer)
- Intervention: 1) Teach Positive Behavior, 2) weaken the challenging behavior, 3) prevention

- Part 1) Strengthen compliance repertoires

- Establish a new working history with the student (could take a while)
- Make sure you have the most powerful reinforcers for that student

NON-COMPLIANT BEHAVIOR

- Part 1) Teaching Compliance
  - Start with an easy task then gradually increase the demands
  - Work in short sets of trials throughout the day
  - Work in all environments
  - Transfer control to other new staff (generalization)
  - Gradually begin to include high problem area demands (e.g., giving up reinforcers)
  - Always end the session on the adult's terms, and on a positive note

NON-COMPLIANT BEHAVIOR

- Part 2) Weaken the challenging behavior
  - Extinction: DO NOT remove the demand
  - Follow through with the demand
  - Be prepared for an extinction burst
  - Make your expectations clear
  - CAUTION: Removing the demand will make the problem worse
  - Make sure the challenging behavior DOES NOT get reinforced
  - Do not bargain-promise reinforcers for stopping the challenging behaviors
  - Do not show reinforcers when kiddo is engaging in challenging behavior
  - "Talking a child down" could be reinforcing the challenging behavior
  - KEEP YOUR POKER FACE-be very non-emotional about it all

NON-COMPLIANT BEHAVIOR

- Part 3) Prevention
  - Identify the high-probability problem areas
  - "Frontload" the kiddo if possible by verbally preparing
  - Use "First-Then" contingency for more verbal children
  - Practice Makes Perfect-ask for the same behavior under less "high probability" times and reinforce
  - If necessary, break the demand into smaller steps and reinforce each step
  - Reinforce approximations
  - Establish time limits for reinfocers
  - Use "bonus time" as reinforcers for the absence of challenging behavior

Summary

- PBS's are required by law in addressing challenging behaviors in the school settings
- Use the three-term contingency to identify correlational relation between the environment and the challenging behavior
- Identify a wide variety of reinforcers and frequently deliver them for good behavior
- Don't reinforce the problem behavior
- Prevent behavior problems (change the task or demand levels, increase prompts, increase reinforcers for approximations)
- Directly teach replacement behaviors
- HAVE LOTS OF FUN WITH YOUR KIDDOS

References

Bijou, S.W., Peterson, R.F., & Ault, M.H. (1968). A method to integrate descriptive and experimental field studies at the level of data and empirical concepts. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, I, 175-191.*

Iwata, B.A., Dorsey, M.F., Slifer, K.J., Bauman, K.E., & Richman, G.S. (1982). Toward a functional analysis of self-injury. *Analysis and intervention in Developmental Disabilities, 2, 3-20.* Reprinted in *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 27, 197-210.*

Mazaleski, J.L., Iwata, B.A., Vollmer, T.R., Zarcone, J.R., & Smith, R.G. (1993). Analysis of the reinforcement and extinction components in DRO contingencies with self-injury. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 26, 143-156.*

Repp, A.C., Barton. L.E., & Brulle, A.R. (1983). A comparison of two procedures for programming the differential reinforcement of other behaviors. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 16, 435-445*